

**Letter: Wolves costing us huge amount of money**

Published on Tuesday, February 17, 2009.

Last modified on 2/17/2009 at 12:48 am

Letter: Wolves costing us huge amount of money

**By Gazette News Services**

A final report by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks shows that wolves are grabbing 67 percent of funding compared to all other big-game surveys in Montana. That number increased from 45 percent in 2005.

According to a fiscal note at the Legislature, FWP is getting \$823,604 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for wolves. FWP is spending about \$2,000 yearly per admitted wolf in the December 2007 wolf count. Current numbers are not available till March. The fiscal note on Senate Bill 183 indicates FWP would like to spend \$6,600 per wolf.

What is the true cost of a wolf in Montana today? What is taken from other FWP programs? How much are the universities, USFWS, Wildlife Services, other agencies and environmental groups spending per wolf added to FWP? What is the cost of the thousands of big-game animals killed by wolves? For example, wolves kill 23 elk per wolf in the Madison Valley in the six winter months. The rest of the year the take is unknown.

Poachers must pay restitution costs to FWP. For trophy elk and deer, it is \$8,000 and moose \$6,000; other elk and moose are \$1,000, antlered deer \$500 and other deer \$300. Wolves are \$2,000 even though they are killing animals valued in the millions.

What are the costs of livestock killed, wounded and harassed as well as animals such as dogs? What are the stress costs for big game, livestock, ranchers, hunters, outfitters, other citizens and businesses and the costs of wolves spreading diseases?

**Allen Schallenberger**  
**Sheridan, Mont.**

Dear Committee,

Wolf numbers reached delisting targets in 2002. Now there are way too many gobbling up our national treasure, the wildlife from grouse to moose. Yet the minute the US Fish and Wildlife Service delisted the wolf, an environmentalist group raced to file suit. These groups are paid from the Federal Treasury for their fees and expenses through the Endangered Species Act. They will never have the best interest of the wildlife or the people who live here at heart.

The scorn they show for the rural people who are literally doing hand to hand combat with wolves is disgusting. I read a story about a ranch woman who was pulling on one end of the leg of a cow while a wolf pulled on the other. The leg was the only thing left to show as evidence of a wolf kill. But rural people are publicly ridiculed by wolf supporters.

I have spent a lot of time in the woods in the last 10 years, and I am reporting to you that the mule deer, grouse, moose and the elk are *gone* in certain areas where only a couple years ago they were plentiful. While town folks complain about deer in their flower gardens, wolves circle the top of Mount Jumbo. It is a travesty and the only people who can stand up for the wildlife in Montana are you. Please help! God help us if hunger ever returns to America.

The Endangered Species Act set up by these same people in the 70's needs revised. It's our culture, our forest and our wildlife that is on the brink because of it. Wolves never were. Our fore-fathers fought and died for an individualist, capitalist society, so government could not be used as a bludgeon against a fellow citizen. Co-dependents want total control but giving it to them is a bad idea – like wolves.

Rena Wetherelt  
130 W. Kent #4  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-544-9389